

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Bruce Edward Gilmore, # 87918, <div style="text-align: right; padding-right: 100px;">Plaintiff,</div>)	C/A No. 6:07-2657-HFF-WMC
)	
)	
)	
vs.)	Report and Recommendation
)	
Harry C. DePew, Attorney; and Warren B. Giese, Solicitor for Fifth Judicial Circuit,)	
)	
)	
Defendants.)	

Background of this Case

The plaintiff is a pre-trial detainee at the Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center in Columbia. The “lead” defendant is the plaintiff’s court-appointed attorney for the plaintiff’s criminal case. The plaintiff has also named the Solicitor of the Fifth Judicial Circuit as a defendant. The “STATEMENT OF CLAIM” portion of the § 1983 complaint reveals that this civil rights action arises out of the plaintiff’s pending criminal case. The plaintiff indicates that his court-appointed attorney has failed to file motions for speedy trial or bond reduction and has not responded to his (the plaintiff’s) inquiries. Part V (the relief portion) of the complaint is left blank, although the plaintiff has signed the complaint on the signature portion at the bottom of page 5.

Discussion

Under established local procedure in this judicial district, a careful review¹ has been made of the *pro se* complaint pursuant to the procedural provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 1915, 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, and the Prison Litigation Reform Act. The review has been conducted in light of the following precedents: *Denton v. Hernandez*, 504 U.S. 25, 118 L.Ed.2d 340, 112 S.Ct. 1728, 1992 U.S. LEXIS® 2689 (1992); *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 324-325, 104 L.Ed.2d 338, 109 S.Ct. 1827, 1989 U.S. LEXIS® 2231 (1989); *Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519 (1972); *Nasim v. Warden, Maryland House of Correction*, 64 F.3d 951, 1995 U.S.App. LEXIS® 26108 (4th Cir. 1995)(*en banc*), *cert. denied*, 516 U.S. 1177, 134 L.Ed.2d 219, 116 S.Ct. 1273, 1996 U.S. LEXIS® 1844 (1996); *Todd v. Baskerville*, 712 F.2d 70 (4th Cir. 1983); *Boyce v. Alizaduh*, 595 F.2d 948 (4th Cir. 1979)(recognizing the district court's authority to conduct an initial screening of any *pro se* filing);² *Loe v. Armistead*, 582 F.2d 1291 (4th Cir. 1978), *cert. denied*, *Moffitt v. Loe*, 446 U.S. 928 (1980); and *Gordon v. Leeke*, 574 F.2d 1147, 1151 (4th Cir.), *cert. denied*, *Leeke v. Gordon*, 439 U.S. 970 (1978). The plaintiff is a *pro se* litigant, and thus his pleadings are accorded liberal construction. See *Erickson v. Pardus*, 75 U.S.L.W. 3643, 167 L.Ed.2d 1081, 127 S.Ct. 2197, 2007 U.S. LEXIS® 6814 (U.S., June 4, 2007)(*per curiam*); *Hughes*

¹Pursuant to the provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(B) and Local Civil Rule 73.02 (DSC), the undersigned is authorized to review such complaints for relief and submit findings and recommendations to the District Court.

²*Boyce* has been held by some authorities to have been abrogated in part, on other grounds, by *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319 (1989)(insofar as *Neitzke* establishes that a complaint that fails to state a claim, under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6), does not by definition merit *sua sponte* dismissal under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(i) [formerly 28 U.S.C. § 1915(d)], as “frivolous”).

v. Rowe, 449 U.S. 5, 9-10 & n. 7 (1980)(*per curiam*); and *Cruz v. Beto*, 405 U.S. 319 (1972). When a federal court is evaluating a *pro se* complaint or petition, the plaintiff's or petitioner's allegations are assumed to be true. *Fine v. City of New York*, 529 F.2d 70, 74 (2nd Cir. 1975). Even under this less stringent standard, the § 1983 complaint is subject to summary dismissal. The requirement of liberal construction does not mean that the court can ignore a clear failure in the pleading to allege facts which set forth a claim currently cognizable in a federal district court. *Weller v. Department of Social Services*, 901 F.2d 387, 1990 U.S.App. LEXIS® 6120 (4th Cir. 1990).

Although the holding in *Heck v. Humphrey*, 512 U.S. 477, 129 L.Ed.2d 383, 114 S.Ct. 2364, 1994 U.S. LEXIS® 4824 (1994), is not applicable to the above-captioned case, see *Wallace v. Kato*, 166 L.Ed.2d 973, 127 S.Ct. 1091, 2007 U.S. LEXIS® 2650 (2007), the above-captioned case is still subject to summary dismissal. Absent extraordinary circumstances, federal courts are not authorized to interfere with a State's pending criminal proceedings. See, e.g., *Younger v. Harris*, 401 U.S. 37, 44 (1971); *Harkrader v. Wadley*, 172 U.S. 148, 169-170 (1898); *Taylor v. Taintor*, 83 U.S. (16 Wall.) 366, 370 & n. 8 (1873);³ *Nivens v. Gilchrist*, 319 F.3d 151, 2003 U.S.App. LEXIS® 2453 (4th Cir. 2003); and *Cinema Blue of Charlotte, Inc. v. Gilchrist*, 887 F.2d 49, 50-53 (4th Cir. 1989), *cert. denied*, 494 U.S. 1030, 108 L.Ed.2d 616, 110 S.Ct. 1479, 1990 U.S. LEXIS® 1399 (1990). In *Cinema Blue of Charlotte, Inc. v. Gilchrist*, the United States Court of

³Although the Supreme Court of the United States has not overruled *Taylor v. Taintor*, an unrelated portion of the decision in *Taylor v. Taintor*, which concerned the right of sureties to apprehend principals, has been superannuated by statute in Texas. See *Green v. State*, 829 S.W.2d 222, 223, 1992 Tex. Crim. App. LEXIS® 102 (Tex. Crim. App. 1992)("However, *Taylor* is not the law in Texas."), *affirming Green v. State*, 785 S.W.2d 955, 1990 Tex. App. LEXIS® 806 (Tex. App. Fort Worth 1990).

Appeals for the Fourth Circuit ruled that federal district courts should abstain from constitutional challenges to state judicial proceedings, no matter how meritorious, if the federal claims have been or could be presented in an ongoing state judicial proceeding. *Cinema Blue of Charlotte, Inc. v. Gilchrist*, *supra*, 887 F.2d at 52. Moreover, the Anti-Injunction Act, 28 U.S.C. § 2283, expressly prohibits this court from enjoining such proceedings. *See also Bonner v. Circuit Court of St. Louis*, 526 F.2d 1331, 1336 (8th Cir. 1975)(*en banc*), *cert. denied*, 424 U.S. 946 (1976).

In *Bonner v. Circuit Court of St. Louis*, the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit pointed out that federal constitutional claims are cognizable in both state courts and in federal courts: "Congress and the federal courts have consistently recognized that federal courts should permit state courts to try state cases, and that, where constitutional issues arise, state court judges are fully competent to handle them subject to Supreme Court review." The *pro se* plaintiff also does not meet the tests for a preliminary injunction or temporary restraining order enunciated in such cases as *North Carolina State Ports Authority v. Dart Containerline Company*, 592 F.2d 749, 750-753 & n. 3 (4th Cir. 1979).

In any event, it is clear that the plaintiff has not exhausted his state remedies. If the plaintiff is later convicted and sentenced in his pending criminal case, he has the remedy of filing a direct appeal. *State v. Northcutt*, 372 S.C. 207, 641 S.E.2d 873, 2007 S.C. LEXIS® 64 (2007). If his direct appeal is unsuccessful, the plaintiff can file an application for post-conviction relief. *See* § 17-27-10, *et seq.*, South Carolina Code of Laws.

Moreover, if a South Carolina prisoner's application for post-conviction relief is denied or dismissed by a Court of Common Pleas, he or she can file an "appeal" (petition for writ of certiorari) in that post-conviction case. See § 17-27-100, South Carolina Code of Laws; and *Knight v. State*, 284 S.C. 138, 325 S.E.2d 535, 1985 S.C. LEXIS® 312 (1985).⁴ In fact, South Carolina prisoners have been successful on such appeals in their post-conviction cases. Moreover, South Carolina prisoners have been successful on such appeals in their post-conviction cases. See, e.g., *Staggs v. State*, 372 S.C. 549, 643 S.E.2d 690, 2007 S.C. LEXIS® 134 (2007)(post-conviction relief granted on grounds of trial counsel's actual conflict of interest from representing members of same family; new trial ordered); *Custodio v. State*, 373 S.C. 4, 644 S.E.2d 36, 2007 S.C. LEXIS® 128, 2007 WESTLAW® 895105 (2007)(post-conviction relief granted on issue of enforcement of plea agreement); *Morris v. State*, 371 S.C. 278, 639 S.E.2d 53, 2006 S.C. LEXIS® 392 (2006)(on issue of ineffective assistance of counsel); *Riddle v. Ozmint*, 369 S.C. 39, 631 S.E.2d 70, 2006 S.C. LEXIS® 177 (2006); *Stevens v. State*, 365 S.C. 309, 617 S.E.2d 366, 2005 S.C. LEXIS® 221(2005); and *Vaughn v. State*, 362 S.C. 163, 607 S.E.2d 72, 73-76, 2004 S.C. LEXIS® 296 (2004).

It is well settled that a direct appeal is a viable state court remedy. *Castille v. Peoples*, 489 U.S. 346, 349-352, 103 L.Ed.2d 380, 109 S.Ct. 1056, 1989 U.S. LEXIS®

⁴The Supreme Court of South Carolina has authorized the South Carolina Court of Appeals to hear petitions for certiorari in post-conviction cases upon referral from the Supreme Court of South Carolina. See Supreme Court Order 2005-08 (C.O. 08 effective May 1, 2005), Shearhouse Advanced Sheet # 19; and *Dunlap v. State*, 371 S.C. 585, 641 S.E.2d 431, 2007 S.C. LEXIS® 41 (2007)("In appeals from criminal convictions **or post-conviction relief matters**, a litigant is not required to petition for rehearing and certiorari following an adverse decision of the Court of Appeals in order to be deemed to have exhausted all available state remedies respecting a claim of error.")(emphasis in original).

1040 (1989). The United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit has held that South Carolina's Uniform Post-Conviction Procedure Act is also a viable state-court remedy. See *Miller v. Harvey*, 566 F.2d 879, 880-881 (4th Cir. 1977), *cert. denied*, 439 U.S. 838 (1978); and *Patterson v. Leeke*, 556 F.2d 1168, 1170-1173 (4th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 434 U.S. 929 (1977). In an application for post-conviction relief, the plaintiff can raise issues relating to ineffective assistance of counsel. See *Strickland v. Washington*, 466 U.S. 668, 686, 80 L.Ed.2d 674, 104 S.Ct. 2052 (1984); and *Brightman v. State*, 336 S.C. 348, 520 S.E.2d 614, 1999 S.C. LEXIS® 164 (1999).

In the above-captioned civil rights action, this federal district court cannot order dismissal of the plaintiff's criminal charge or order his release from confinement. "Release from prison is not a remedy available under 42 U.S.C. § 1983." *Myers v. Pauling*, 1995 U.S. Dist. LEXIS® 7628, 1995 WESTLAW® 334284 (E.D.Pa., June 2, 1995). See also *Edwards v. Balisok*, 520 U.S. 641, 137 L.Ed.2d 906, 117 S.Ct. 1584, 1997 U.S. LEXIS® 3075 (1997).

The Federal Speedy Trial Act, 18 U.S.C. § 3116 *et seq.*, applies to criminal prosecutions brought by the United States, and is not applicable to prosecutions by a State. See, e.g., *United States v. Hall*, 1994 U.S. Dist. LEXIS® 14290, 1994 WESTLAW® 544514 (D.Kan., September 13, 1994); *United States v. Hanks*, 1994 U.S. Dist. LEXIS® 14295, 1994 WESTLAW® 544516 (D.Kan., September 13, 1994); and *United States v. James*, 861 F. Supp. 151, 1994 U.S. Dist. LEXIS® 11910, *3-*12 & nn. 1-2 (D.D.C. 1994). Hence, the Federal Speedy Trial Act provides no basis for relief in the above-captioned case.

The Sixth Amendment, which, *inter alia*, provides that criminal defendants have the right to a speedy and public trial, was made applicable to the States in 1948. See *In Re Oliver*, 333 U.S. 257, 273 (1948). Even so, in light of the petitioner's failure to exhaust his state remedies, it is unnecessary for this court to conduct a full analysis of the four-part "speedy trial" test set forth by the Supreme Court in *Barker v. Wingo*, 407 U.S. 514, 530 (1972).

Solicitor Giese has absolute prosecutorial immunity insofar as his actions in the plaintiff's criminal case are concerned. In South Carolina, regional prosecutors are called Solicitors and Assistant Solicitors. See § 24 of Article V, Constitution of the State of South Carolina; and § 1-7-310, South Carolina Code of Laws. Solicitors are elected by voters of a judicial circuit. Prosecutors, such as Solicitor Giese, have absolute immunity for activities in or connected with judicial proceedings, such as a criminal trial, bond hearings, bond hearings, bail hearings, grand jury proceedings, and pre-trial "motions" hearings. See *Buckley v. Fitzsimmons*, 509 U.S. 259, 125 L.Ed.2d 209, 113 S.Ct. 2606, 1993 U.S. LEXIS® 4400 (1993); *Burns v. Reed*, 500 U.S. 478, 114 L.Ed.2d 547, 561-562 & n. 6, 111 S.Ct. 1934, 1991 U.S. LEXIS® 3018 (1991); and *Dababnah v. Keller-Burnside*, 208 F.3d 467, 2000 U.S.App. LEXIS® 6114 (4th Cir. 2000). Moreover, prosecutorial immunity will extend to the direct appeal and the post-conviction case. See *Bruce v. Wade*, 537 F.2d 850, 852 (5th Cir. 1976), where the Court concluded that an attorney representing a government in a habeas corpus or post-conviction case has absolute prosecutorial immunity; and *Henzel v. Gerstein*, 608 F.2d 654, 657 (5th Cir. 1979)(prosecutorial immunity extends to appeals). Cf. *Lowe v. Letsinger*, 772 F.2d 308,

314-315 & n. 7 (7th Cir. 1985); and *Houston v. Partee*, 978 F.2d 362, 365-369 & nn. 3-4, 1992 U.S.App. LEXIS® 27825 (7th Cir. 1992), *cert. denied*, *Partee v. Houston*, 507 U.S. 1005, 123 L.Ed.2d 269, 113 S.Ct. 1647, 1993 U.S. LEXIS® 2453 (1993).

Harry DePew, the plaintiff's court appointed attorney, is entitled to summary dismissal because he has not acted under color of state law. In order to state a cause of action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, a plaintiff must allege that: (1) the defendant(s) deprived him or her of a federal right, and (2) did so under color of state law. See *Gomez v. Toledo*, 446 U.S. 635, 640 (1980); and *American Mfr. Mut. Ins. Co. v. Sullivan*, 526 U.S. 40, 50-52, 143 L.E.2d 130, 119 S.Ct. 977, 1999 U.S. LEXIS® 1711 (1999).

An attorney, whether retained, court-appointed, or a public defender, does not act under color of state law, which is a jurisdictional prerequisite for any civil action brought under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. See *Deas v. Potts*, 547 F.2d 800 (4th Cir. 1976)(private attorney); *Hall v. Quillen*, 631 F.2d 1154, 1155-1156 & nn. 2-3 (4th Cir. 1980), *cert. denied*, 454 U.S. 1141 (1982)(court-appointed attorney); and *Polk County v. Dodson*, 454 U.S. 312, 317-324 & nn. 8-16 (1981)(public defender).

The district court in *Hall v. Quillen*, *supra*, had disposed of the case against a physician and a court-appointed attorney on grounds of immunity. In affirming the district court's order, the Court of Appeals, however, indicated that lower courts should first determine whether state action occurred:

* * * But immunity as a defense only becomes a relevant issue in a case such as this if the court has already determined affirmatively that the action of the defendant represented state action. This is so because state action is an essential preliminary condition to § 1983 jurisdiction, and a failure to find state action disposes of such an action adversely to the plaintiff. * * *

Hall v. Quillen, 631 F.2d at 1155 (citations omitted). See also *Lugar v. Edmondson Oil Co.*, 457 U.S. 922, 936 (1982)("Careful adherence to the 'state action' requirement . . . also avoids imposing on the State, its agencies or officials, responsibility for conduct for which they cannot fairly be blamed."); and *Burton v. Wilmington Parking Authority*, 365 U.S. 715, 721 (1961).⁵

Also, no relief is requested by the plaintiff in Part V of the complaint. In other words, the plaintiff has not disclosed what relief (if any) he is requesting. When a plaintiff has failed to ask for relief, a federal district court "is faced with the prospect of rendering an advisory opinion; federal courts may not render advisory opinions, however." *Humphreys v. Renner*, 1996 WESTLAW® 88804 (N.D.Cal., February 26, 1996), following *FCC v. Pacifica Foundation*, 438 U.S. 726, 735 (1978)("[F]ederal courts have never been empowered to issue advisory opinions."). See also *Public Service Co. v. United States Environmental Protection Agency*, 225 F.3d 1144, 1148 n. 4, 2000 U.S.App. LEXIS® 22180 (10th Cir. 2000)(company's failure to ask for relief constitutes a request for an advisory opinion, which is barred by Article III). Cf. *Herb v. Pitcairn*, 324 U.S. 117, 126 (1945)("We are not permitted to render an advisory opinion[.]");⁶ *Neitzke v. Williams, supra*, 490 U.S. at 322-330 (*held*: although district courts should not blur the distinction between the standards applicable to a Rule 12(b)(6) dismissal for failure to state a claim upon which

⁵*Burton* involved the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, not 42 U.S.C. § 1983. However, federal courts have uniformly held that conduct which constitutes state action under the Fourteenth Amendment also constitutes action under color of state law, insofar as suits under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 are concerned. *West v. Atkins*, 487 U.S. 42, 48-49, 101 L.Ed.2d 40, 108 S.Ct. 2250, 1988 U.S. LEXIS® 2744 (1988)(collecting cases).

⁶Other portions of the decision in *Herb v. Pitcairn* have been superannuated by later case law. See *Michigan v. Long*, 463 U.S. 1032 (1983).

relief can be granted and a dismissal under 28 U.S.C. § 1915 because a claim is frivolous, a patently insubstantial complaint, petition, or pleading may be dismissed); and *United States v. Burlington Northern Railroad Co.*, 200 F.3d 679, 699, 1999 U.S.App. LEXIS® 33143 (10th Cir. 1999)(refusing to respond to party's "request for guidance in future cases" because the request was "tantamount to a request for an advisory opinion").

Recommendation

Accordingly, it is recommended that the District Court dismiss the above-captioned case *without prejudice* and without issuance and service of process. See *Denton v. Hernandez, supra*; *Neitzke v. Williams, supra*; *Haines v. Kerner, supra*; *Brown v. Briscoe*, 998 F.2d 201, 202-204 & n. *, 1993 U.S.App. LEXIS® 17715 (4th Cir. 1993), *replacing* unpublished opinion originally tabled at 993 F.2d 1535 (4th Cir. 1993); *Boyce v. Alizaduh, supra*; *Todd v. Baskerville, supra*, 712 F.2d at 74; 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)[essentially a redesignation of "old" 1915(d)]; and 28 U.S.C. § 1915A[as soon as possible after docketing, district courts should review prisoner cases to determine whether they are subject to summary dismissal]. The plaintiff's attention is directed to the Notice on the next page.

August 3, 2007
Greenville, South Carolina

s/William M. Catoe
United States Magistrate Judge

Notice of Right to File Objections to Report and Recommendation

The plaintiff is advised that he may file specific written objections to this Report and Recommendation with the District Court Judge. **Objections must specifically identify the portions of the Report and Recommendation to which objections are made and the basis for such objections.** In the absence of a timely filed objection, a district court judge need not conduct a *de novo* review, but instead must “only satisfy itself that there is no clear error on the face of the record in order to accept the recommendation.” *Diamond v. Colonial Life & Acc. Ins. Co.*, 416 F.3d 310 (4th Cir. 2005).

Specific written objections must be filed within ten (10) days of the date of service of this Report and Recommendation. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); Fed. R. Civ. P. 72(b). The time calculation of this ten-day period excludes weekends and holidays and provides for an additional three (3) days for filing by mail. Fed. R. Civ. P. 6(a) & (e). Filing by mail pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 5 may be accomplished by mailing objections to:

**Larry W. Propes, Clerk
United States District Court
Post Office Box 10768
Greenville, South Carolina 29603**

Failure to timely file specific written objections to this Report and Recommendation will result in a waiver of the right to appeal from a judgment of the District Court based upon such Recommendation. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); *Thomas v. Arn*, 474 U.S. 140 (1985); *United States v. Schronce*, 727 F.2d 91 (4th Cir.), *cert. denied*, *Schronce v. United States*, 467 U.S. 1208 (1984); and *Wright v. Collins*, 766 F.2d 841 (4th Cir. 1985).